

# Science promotes summer learning

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By Staff Reports email

## EDITORIAL

Educators make lots of noise around this time of year about “summer learning loss,” the brain drain that happens over the summer when children lose some of the progress they made over the past year due to not being in a learning environment on a regular basis.

While summertime is good for many things important to children — relaxation, physical activity, friendships, seeing family, exploring hobbies and literally expanding their horizons by vacationing away from home — academic learning isn't something that usually happens in July and August.

The story is different for the students who participate in the Boys and Girls Club, though.

The club, which meets at John F. Kennedy Middle School, makes sure that its young participants learn something every day. Whether it's financial literacy or how to keep their body healthy, a variety of programs that will benefit them later in life take place at the club constantly.

This week, it was science, math, engineering and technology — the so-called “STEM” subjects that educators stress — that was the focus of the Boys and Girls Club.

The science fair was run by Amy Wilkerson, a Holland native and laboratory and research manager at the College of William and Mary.

This is her third year of running the program, and Wilkerson has learned through trial and error. She retains activities and demonstrations the kids like and replace ones they don't like.

This year, representatives from William and Mary showed the kids experiments with light and refraction. Professors and students from Norfolk State University and Christopher Newport University introduced the kids to molecules and atoms through visual aids. There were balloons, tornadoes in beakers, spinning toys and two 3-D printers.

One of the biggest attractions at the science fair was the first aid demonstration, provided by Sandra Prior, director of environmental health and safety at William and Mary. She sprayed shaving cream on the kids' latex gloves and showed them how to safely remove gloves without contamination. The centerpieces of her table were her two dummies: one for CPR and one for the Heimlich maneuver. Kids took turns saving “Choking Charlie” with the anti-choking technique.

First aid is among the most important science-related activities kids can learn, and the introductions to more advanced topics, such as molecules and atoms, don't hurt either.

We applaud Wilkerson and Reggie Carter of the Boys and Girls Club for bringing this event to Suffolk's children during the summer. We expect them to be a little further ahead of their peers when they return to school in September.



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